

3. A NOTE ON THE BREEDING OF THE LEOPARD-CAT (*FELIS BENGALENSIS*) IN CAPTIVITY

The female of a pair of Leopard-Cats (*Felis bengalensis*) has given birth to four litters at Nandankanan Biological Park, Orissa. The litter size was one to two with an average of 1.75 kittens per litter. There were four females and three males. The four births were recorded as follows: February, 1; March, 1; May, 1; and July, 1. At birth the seven kittens weighed 93 to 120 g with an average of 113.14 g and measured 22 to 25 cm with an average of 24.14 cm tip to tip including tail lengths of 6.5 to 7 cm (average 6.86 cm). The

inter-parturition intervals recorded thrice (Dates of births: 26.ii.1977, 19.v.1977, 21.iii.1978 and 4.vii.1978) were 81 days, 305 days and 104 days respectively mostly depending on the period of survival of the young. The mother leopard-cat weighed 2.805 kg and the male weighed 3.605 kg on 8.iii.1977. The mother used to carry the kittens like other cats. The eyes of the new-born kittens were closed at birth and the details of opening of eyes of five kittens under observation are given in the Table 1.

TABLE 1

| Sl. No. | Sex | Date of birth | Dates of opening of eyes | Age in the days when the eyes of the kittens opened |
|---------|--------|---------------|--|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. | Female | 19.v.1977 | 31.v.1977 (Left eye) and 1.vi.1977 (Right eye) | 13th (Left eye) and 14th (Right eye) |
| 2. | Female | 19.v.1977 | 26.v.1977 (Right eye) and 27.v.1977 (Left eye) | 8th (Right eye) and 9th (Left eye) |
| 3. | Female | 21.iii.1978 | 31.iii.1978 (Left eye) and 1.iv.1978 (Right eye) | 11th (Left eye) and 12th (Right eye) |
| 4. | Female | 4.vii.1978 | 11.vii.1978 (Left eye) and 12.vii.1978 (Right eye) | 8th (Left eye) and 9th (Right eye) |
| 5. | Male | 4.vii.1978 | 14.vii.1978 (Right eye) and 15.vii.1978 (Left eye) | 11th (Right eye) and 12th (Left eye) |

TABLE 2

| Date | Age in weeks | Weight in kg. |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 19.v.1977 | Birth | 0.120 |
| 26.v.1977 | 1 | 0.182 |
| 2.vi.1977 | 2 | 0.232 |
| 9.vi.1977 | 3 | 0.294 |
| 16.vi.1977 | 4 | 0.385 |
| 23.vi.1977 | 5 | 0.430 |
| 30.vi.1977 | 6 | 0.570 |
| 7.vii.1977 | 7 | 0.695 |
| 14.vii.1977 | 8 | 0.845 |
| 21.vii.1977 | 9 | 0.945 |
| 28.vii.1977 | 10 | 1.073 |
| 4.viii.1977 | 11 | 1.156 |

VETERINARY ASSISTANT SURGEON,
NANDANKANAN BIOLOGICAL PARK,
P. O. BARANG, DIST. CUTTACK.

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December 16, 1978.

The canines of two kittens under observation appeared at the age of four weeks. Weekly growth records of one female kitten born here on 19.5.1977 was maintained upto the age of 11 weeks and the details of the same are given in the Table 2.

Prater (1971) states that the young of this species have been obtained in March and May and 3 to 4 kittens may be born in a litter. In India, this species mates in May and has 3 to 4 young per litter after a gestation period of 56 days (Asdell 1964).

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ASDELL, S. A. (1964): Patterns of Mammalian Reproduction. Second Edition, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, pp. 490.

PRATER, S. H. (1971): The Book of Indian Animals. Third (Revised) Edition, Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay, pp. 73-74.

4. DO LEOPARDS USE THEIR WHISKERS AS WIND DETECTOR?

I had an opportunity to witness a peculiar behaviour of a big male Leopard in the hilly tract of Udaipur.

My father and we three brothers were sitting on a hillock and admiring four sambar (*Cervus unicolor*) does and two grown up fawns grazing peacefully in a clearing on the face of a hill about 200 yards from us. Between us and the sambar, there was a belt of scrub jungle and beyond there was dense jungle. They were on a higher ground from us. We were engrossed in watching when sud-

denly my elder brother caught sight of a leopard in a depression, between us and the hinds about 80 yards from us, stalking them. A good breeze started from our direction towards the hinds. When the leopard was about 70 yards from them and almost level with us the does became uneasy. He crouched there for about five minutes occasionally raising and slightly turning his head sideways, his whiskers taut and relaxed alternately, which I could see clearly with the help of binoculars. Then the leopard turned and retreated for about 30